Plato's *Republic*

Book II

Tripartite Classification of Goods

- In Book II, Glaucon & Adeimantus take up Thrasymachus' argument, though they are clearly playing devil's advocates. Glaucon agrees with Socrates that his previous arguments against Thrasymachus were inadequate (357b).
- Glaucon begins with a *tripartite classification of goods:*
  1. **Purely intrinsic goods:** those "that we would choose to have not because we desire [their] consequences, but because we delight in [them] for [their] own sake" (e.g., happiness or *eudaimonia*);
  2. **Intrinsic *and* instrumental goods:** those that "we like *both* for [their] own sake *and* for what comes out of [them]" (e.g., **health**); &
  3. **Purely instrumental goods:** those that "we would not choose to have for themselves but [only] for the sake of the wages and whatever comes out of them" (e.g., a visit to the dentist).

Glaucon's Challenge to Socrates

- Glaucon presents Socrates with a challenge here that will occupy him for most of the book: he wants to be shown "what power [justice] has *all by itself* when it is in the soul—*dismissing its wages and its consequences"* (358c).
- Because Category 2 and 3 goods both have *instrumental* value, Glaucon wants that value *stripped away in speech* so that he can better see what distinguishes these two categories of goods: viz., the *intrinsic* value of the former.
- Cf. Immanuel Kant in his *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, where virtue stripped of interest "shine[s] forth all the more brightly," like a jewel (*GMM* 4:394/397).
- Later on, in Book X, Socrates asks for justice's reputation back (612d) as a prelude to discussing its *instrumental* value, especially in the afterlife

- After making this challenge, Glaucon and Adeimantus also make the associated case for *an unjust life combined with a* ***reputation*** *for justice* (cf. Thrasymachus):
- **Glaucon** offers his famous “social contract” argument for being just: justice is not good in itself but is rather a “mean” between what is *best* (“doing injustice without paying the penalty”) and what is *worst* (“suffering injustice without being able to avenge oneself”); it is *strictly conventional* in nature and would be avoided by *anyone* strong enough to do the former, as the ***Myth of Gyges*** is designed to show (359c-360d). He finishes by comparing “perfectly” just and unjust men, with the former having a reputation for injustice and the latter for justice (deception as *ring*), for the reasons discussed above (360e-362d).
- **Adeimantus** reinforces Glaucon’s argument by noting that most of the arguments in favor of justice (made by fathers, poets, etc.) are really arguments in favor of *appearing* just, which can be achieved by *un*just men if sufficiently clever

Socrates' Begins His Response

- Socrates now begins his long response to this challenge, which is to show the *intrinsic* value of justice, to show what effect it has "in the soul of a man who possesses it and is *not noticed* by gods and men" (366e).
- Socrates begins by claiming that ***justice in the city and justice in the man are analogous***. On the strength of this *controversial* claim, he starts by considering justice in the *city*, promising to return to justice in the *man* at a later point (368d-369b; cf. 352a-b; *at 434e he returns to it*).

- Plato constructs his *kallipolis* (ideal city) in *three stages*, each building upon/incorporating the last:
  1. **City of Sows (369a-372d):** a city characterized by a division of labor, trade, and commercial prosperity; it initially focuses on *necessary bodily desires* but in time turns to *unnecessary* ones, becoming a "luxurious city" that pursues war and thus needs soldiers (372e-374e);
  2. **Proto-kallipolis (399e-):** emerges from (1) when these guardians are able to *purge* the city of its luxury; and
  3. **Kallipolis (473c-):** brought into existence only when *philosophers are able to rule as kings*, using a wisdom unavailable to mere soldiers.
- Thus we move from a one-class to a two-class to a three-class city. This sequential

The City of Sows

- Arises due to our *lack of self-sufficiency* (369b).
- Tasks assumed within it according to the *division of labor*, defended in *precisely* the same way that it is defended by economists today:
  1. it exploits natural differences in abilities;
  2. it allows rapid movement along a learning curve; and
  3. it reduces the costs of shifting tasks (369e-370d).
- It will have a currency, markets, retailers, foreign trade, etc. (371a-e)—all the features of a commercial society **such as Athens**—and strive to satisfy the *necessary bodily desires;* it's thus aptly called a "city of sows" (372d), fat and happy.
- Naturally, though, such a city will overstep the "boundary of the necessary" through "unlimited acquisition of money" and become a "luxurious city." This will lead to expansionist wars of economic acquisition. The logic of the division of labor will then call for the addition of another class: the *guardian* or professional soldier. (372e-374e)

Qualities of the Guardian

- They must show spirit (*thumos*); they must be "gentle to their own and cruel to enemies" (cf. Polemarchus' definition of justice at 332d); etc. In short, they must be strong, swift, spirited, and ***philosophic***. (374e-375c).
- The argument for this last quality is a bit of a stretch: "how can it [a dog] be anything other than a lover of learning since it defines what's its own and what's alien by knowledge and ignorance?"
- Does Socrates mean to be taken seriously here, or is this another example of Socratic irony? Perhaps he is noting what will be a *weakness* of the proto-*kallipolis:* its rulers, the guardians, will *lack* wisdom, and will therefore be in need of philosopher kings to bring about a true *kallipolis*.

Education *(Paideia)* of Guardians

- Components: *music* and *gymnastics* (376e→**VII**).
- Key to this section is its advocacy of *censorship of children's literature* (377c): all the stories of Hesiod, Homer, etc., must be purged if they make "a *bad representation* of what gods and heroes are like" (377e; fleshed out in Book X).
- Plato finds especially offensive tales depicting gods punishing their fathers, battling other gods, dispensing evil, changing shape, *deceiving*, etc. (378a-383c)
- The gods must rather be portrayed as faithful, respectful, unchanging, truthful, and a source of only **Good**—*models*, in